

## § 17.602

or university. If an individual is enrolled in a school and is pursuing a course of study which is designed to be completed in more than 4 years, the individual will be considered a full-time student for only the last 4 years of the course study.

(j) *Other educational expenses* means a reasonable amount of funds determined by the Secretary to cover expenses such as books, and laboratory equipment.

(k) *Required educational equipment* means educational equipment which must be rented or purchased by all students pursuing a similar curriculum in the same school.

(l) *Required fees* means those fees which are charged by the school to all students pursuing a similar curriculum in the same school.

(m) *Scholarship Program* or *Scholarship* means the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Professional Scholarship Program authorized by section 216 of the Act.

(n) *Participant* or *Scholarship Program Participant* means an individual whose application to the Scholarship Program has been approved and whose contract has been accepted by the Secretary and who has yet to complete the period of obligated service or otherwise satisfy the obligation or financial liabilities of the Scholarship Contract.

(o) *School* means an academic institution which (1) provides training leading to a degree in a direct or indirect health-care service discipline needed by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and (2) which is accredited by a body or bodies recognized for accreditation by the Secretary.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7602(a))

(p) *School year* means, for purposes of the stipend payment, all or part of the 12-month period from September 1 through August 31 during which a participant is enrolled in the school as a full-time student.

(q) *State* means one of the several States, Territories and possessions of the United States, the District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

(r) *Part-time student* means an individual who is a Department of Veterans Affairs employee permanently

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assigned to a Department of Veterans Affairs health care facility who has been accepted for enrollment or enrolled for study leading to a degree on a less than full-time but not less than half-time basis.

(s) *Department of Veterans Affairs employee* means an individual employed and permanently assigned to a VA health care facility.

(t) *Degree completion date* means the date on which a participant completes all requirements of the degree program.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7452)

(u) *VA health care facility* means Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers, medical and regional office centers, domiciliaries, independent outpatient clinics, and outpatient clinics in regional offices.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7633)

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 2900–0352)

[47 FR 10810, Mar. 12, 1982, as amended at 48 FR 37399, Aug. 18, 1983; 54 FR 28674, July 7, 1989; 55 FR 40170, Oct. 2, 1990; 61 FR 21969, May 13, 1996]

### § 17.602 Eligibility.

(a) To be eligible for a scholarship under this program an applicant must—

(1) Be accepted for enrollment or be enrolled as a full-time student in an accredited school located in a State;

(2) Be pursuing a degree annually designated by the Secretary for participation in the Scholarship Program;

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7602(a)(1), 7612(b)(1))

(3) Be in a discipline or program annually designated by the Secretary for participation in the Scholarship Program;

(4) Be a citizen of the United States; and

(5) Submit an application to participate in the Scholarship Program together with a signed contract.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7602(a))

(b) To be eligible for a scholarship as a part-time student under this program, an applicant must satisfy requirements of paragraph (a) of this section and in addition must—

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(1) Be a full-time VA employee permanently assigned to a VA health care facility at the time of application and on the date when the scholarship is awarded;

(2) Remain a VA employee for the duration of the scholarship award.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7612(c)(3)(B))

(c) Any applicant who, at the time of application, owes a service obligation to any other entity to perform service after completion of the course of study is ineligible to receive a scholarship under the Department of Veterans Affairs Scholarship Program.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7602(b))

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[47 FR 10810, Mar. 12, 1982, as amended at 48 FR 37399, Aug. 18, 1983; 54 FR 28674, July 7, 1989]

### § 17.603 Availability of scholarships.

Scholarships will be awarded only when necessary to assist the Department of Veterans Affairs in alleviating shortages or anticipated shortages of personnel in particular health professions. The existence of a shortage of personnel will be determined in accordance with specific criteria for each health profession, promulgated by the Under Secretary for Health. The Secretary has the authority to determine the number of scholarships to be awarded in a fiscal year, and the number that will be awarded to full-time and part-time students.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7612(b)(4) and 7603(b)(1))

[54 FR 28674, July 7, 1989, as amended at 61 FR 21969, May 13, 1996]

### § 17.604 Application for the scholarship program.

Each individual desiring a scholarship under this program must submit an accurate and complete application in the form and at the time prescribed by the Secretary. Included with the application will be a signed written contract to accept payment of a scholarship and to serve a *period of obligated service* (as defined in § 17.607) if the ap-

plication is approved and if the contract is accepted by the Secretary.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7612(c)(1)(B))

[47 FR 10810, Mar. 12, 1982]

### § 17.605 Selection of participants.

(a) *General.* In deciding which Scholarship Program applications will be approved by the Secretary, priority will be given to applicants entering their final year of education or training and priority will be given to applicants who previously received scholarship awards and who meet the conditions of paragraph (d) of this section. Except for continuation awards (see paragraph (d) of this section), applicants will be evaluated under the criteria specified in paragraph (b) of this section. A situation may occur in which there are a larger number of equally qualified applicants than there are awards to be made. In such cases, a random method may be used as the basis for selection. In selecting participants to receive awards as part-time students, the Secretary may, at the Secretary's discretion—

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7612(b)(5))

(1) Award scholarships geographically to part-time students so that available scholarships may be distributed on a relatively equal basis to students working throughout the VA health care system, and/or

(2) Award scholarships on the basis of retention needs within the VA health care system.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7603(d))

(b) *Selection.* In evaluating and selecting participants, the Secretary will take into consideration those factors determined necessary to assure effective participation in the Scholarship Program. The factors may include, but not be limited to—

(1) Work/volunteer experience, including prior health care employment and Department of Veterans Affairs employment;

(2) Faculty and employer recommendations;

(3) Academic performance; and

(4) Career goals.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7633)